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1934-1935
Legal Representation
Los Angeles Co.

PUBLIC DEFENDER'S DEPARTMENT

LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.

503 Hall of Justice,

Los Angeles.

ANNUAL REPORT

July 1,1934, to July 1, 1935.

FREDERIC H. VERCOE

Public Defender

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ANNUAL REPORT OF PUBLIC DEFENDER OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY
Fiscal year, July 1, 1934, to July 1, 1935.

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The Public Defender, during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1935, handled 2,185 criminal cases, 12 insanity cases and 2 contempt cases. The Public Defender represented the defendant in 56.5% of all cases filed by the District Attorney in the Superior Court during the last fiscal year.

CRIMINAL CASES

Cases in which appearances were made in Court.

Total number of court appearances in Superior Court -		7,352
Total number of defendants represented - - - - - - - -		2,224
Cases undisposed of July 1, 1934, and finally disposed of during last fiscal year - - - - -	113	
Felony cases, Superior Court - - - - - - - - - -	1914	
Contributing cases in Superior Court, Misdemeanors - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	158	
Insanity cases, Superior Court - - - - - - - -	12	
Contempt cases, Superior Court - - - - - - - -	2	2,199

CONSULTATIONS

Consultations in office and county jail (cases in which appearances were not made in court) - -	143
Total	2,342

TRIALS IN CRIMINAL CASES

Total number of trials set during year and disposed of - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -		1,059
Trials eliminated by changing pleas of not guilty to guilty - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	444	
Cases disposed of by being dismissed - - - - -	91	

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Cases disposed of by being stricken from calendar -	24	
Cases actually tried - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	424	
Otherwise disposed of - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	76	1,059

RESULT OF TRIALS

Verdicts of guilty - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	240	
Verdicts of guilty less offense - - - - - - - -	17	
Verdicts of not guilty - - - - - - - - - - - - -	142	
Jury disagreements - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	12	
Verdicts sane- criminal insanity trials - - -	7	
Verdicts insane- criminal insanity trials - -	5	
Jury disagreed- criminal insanity trials - -	1	424

CIVIL INSANITY TRIALS

Verdicts sane - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	2	
Verdicts insane - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	8	
Jury disagreed - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	1	11
Total number of trials completed - - - - - - - -		435

SUPERIOR COURT PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

CONTRIBUTING CASES

Total preliminary examinations - - - - - - - - -		112
Defendants held to answer to Superior Court- -	108	
Defendants discharged and cases dismissed - --	4	
	112	

MISCELLANEOUS DISPOSITIONS

PLEAS OF GUILTY

Total pleas of guilty to offense charged - - - -	1088	
Total pleas of guilty of less offense than charged	68	
Total		1,156

Cases disposed of by being stricken from calendar - 54

Cases actually tried - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 454

Otherwise disposed of - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 76 1,059

RESULT OF TRIALS

Verdicts of guilty - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 540

Verdicts of guilty less offense - - - - - - - - - 17

Verdicts of not guilty - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 142

Jury disagreements - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 15

Verdicts sane- criminal insanity trials - - - 7

Verdicts insane- criminal insanity trials - - 8

Jury disagreed- criminal insanity trials - - 1 484

CIVIL INSANITY TRIALS

Verdicts sane - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 5

Verdicts insane - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 8

Jury disagreed - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1 14

Total number of trials completed - - - - - - - - 498

SUPERIOR COURT PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

CONTINUING CAUSES

Total preliminary examinations - - - - - - - - - 112

Defendants held to answer to Superior Court- - 108

Defendants discharged and cases dismissed - - - 4

112

RECONSIDERATIONS DISPOSITIONS

PLEAS OF GUILTY

Total pleas of guilty to offense charged - - - - 1088

Total pleas of guilty of less offense than charged 88

Total 1,176

PROBATION ORDERS

Defendants granted probation without jail sentence	124	
Defendants granted probation with jail sentence	417	
Defendants denied probation	308	849

SENTENCES AND FINES

Defendants sentenced to death	2	
Defendants sentenced to San Quentin	254	
Defendants sentenced to Folsom	88	
Defendants sentenced to Tehachepi (Women)	7	
Defendants committed to Preston School (Ione)	50	
Defendants committed to Ventura (Girls)	2	
Defendants sentenced to County Jail	444	
Defendants fined	134	981

DEFENDANTS COMMITTED TO STATE HOSPITALS

Defendants committed to State Hospitals as insane	10	
Defendants committed to Spadra (Narcotics)	1	11

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Motions for new trials granted	3	
Motions for new trials denied	16	19
Demurrers sustained	0	
Demurrers overruled	2	2
Cases pending and undisposed of	117	117

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PUBLIC DEFENDER SAVES EXPENSE TO COUNTY

The Public Defender saved the County of Los Angeles at least four times the cost of operating the office during the last fiscal year by the manner in which the defense of persons accused of crime was conducted. Unnecessary loss of time was eliminated without sacrificing the interests of the accused. Pleas of guilty were encouraged where the defendants was obviously guilty. Unnecessary and costly trials were avoided whenever it was possible to do so. The time consumed in the trial of cases was shortened by eliminating the dilatory and procrastinating tactics sometimes engaged in by attorneys representing defendants. Many specific cases wherein a great saving of time and expense was effected could be mentioned but it does not seem opportune to include them in this report.

ESTIMATED AMOUNT OF MONEY SAVED THE COUNTY.

During the last fiscal year the Public Defender handled 2,185 criminal cases in the Superior Court. Of these, 1,059 were set for trial but only 424 cases were actually tried. 559 cases were disposed of without trial. 444 of said trials were disposed of by changing the pleas of defendants from not guilty to guilty. Dismissals were made in 91 cases because it would not have been advantageous to try them, and 24 cases were stricken from the calendar. In each of said cases the rights of the defendants were, under the law, fully protected and accorded to them.

But for the work of the Public Defender we are of the opinion that at least 500 more of said cases would have gone to trial. If said 500 cases had gone to trial it would have required four more Superior Courts, assigned to the trial of criminal cases, than are now handling such cases, functioning full time, to have tried said cases.

In round figures, it costs the county of Los Angeles $50,000.00 a year to operate a Superior Court for the handling of criminal cases. With four more courts operating it would have cost the county an additional $200,000.00 to dispose of its criminal cases.

PUBLIC DEFENDER IN CIVIL CASES.

The Public Defender also has a civil jurisdiction which is hardly less important than his criminal jurisdiction. Under the county charter he is authorized to prosecute actions for the collection of wages and other claims of persons not financially able to employ counsel, in cases where the sum involved does not exceed one hundred dollars.

Millions of dollars are spent in the State of California each year in giving indigent persons, the poor, needy and helpless, medical aid and hospitalization. This aid is rendered by the state so that said persons may be restored to health and again placed, if possible, in a self-supporting condition.

It is the duty of society to render legal aid to the poor, needy and helpless, in order to straighten out their

legal difficulties, secure for them their rights under the law and redress for their wrongs, so that they may continue to be self-supporting and not become charges of the public welfare departments.

REPORT OF CIVIL CASES.

Total number of applications in the office for assistance in both civil and criminal cases - - - -		33,913
Applications in which advice was given on various subjects - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -		15,615
Applications rejected because applicants were able to pay a fee or because the office was without jurisdiction:		
Refused - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	2,295	
Referred to attorney - - - - - -	3,007	5,302
Cases accepted and handled - - - - - - - - - - - - -		2,138

CASES ACCEPTED AND HANDLED

Labor claims - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	393	
Detention of or injury to personal property - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	271	
Illegal Attachments and garnishments and other persecution cases - - - - - - -	887	
Miscellaneous accepted cases - - - - - - -	287	2,138

Money collected and chattels recovered without suit (approx) - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	$14,606.41
Amount of wages released from illegal garnishment - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	18,060.32
Amount of judgments recovered - - - -	$311.00
Amount collected on judgments - - - - - - - - -	331.94
Amount collected on settlements before trial- -	365.43
	33,704.10

Suits filed and won - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	6	
Suits filed and lost - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	0	
Suits filed and settled before trial - - - - -	10	
Suits filed in which office withdrew as attorney - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	1	
Suits filed and not disposed of - - - - - - -	6	23

Total appearances in court on cases filed and miscellaneous accepted cases - - - - - - - - - 242

Respectfully submitted,

FREDERIC H. VERCOE,

PUBLIC DEFENDER

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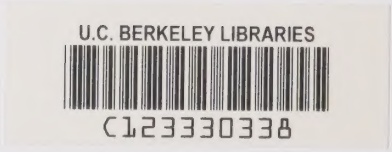

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